

Lake Oswego Students Bring Activist Angela Davis to Speak

By LORRAINE-MICHELLE FAUST
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

After fighting for civil rights in the 1960s, making the FBI's most wanted list and serving time in federal prison, Angela Davis spoke in Lake Oswego about racism in the criminal justice system.

Davis now works as a professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz and tours the country making speaking engagements.

She recently addressed students at Lake Ridge Auditorium, brought there by the efforts of Andrew Duden's Political Action Seminar class at Lake Oswego High School.

"We think Lake Oswego is kind of a close-minded community and we wanted to open it up to students," said Jocelyn Bray, a Lake Oswego High School student.

The class gets involved in community service events and political forums. Last year, they brought Bobby Seale, one of the founders of the



PHOTO BY LORRAINE-MICHELLE FAUST/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Angela Davis sparks a discussion on political action in Lake Oswego

Black Panthers, to speak at the school. The student that was most responsible for bringing Bobby Seale last year and Angela Davis this year is Nathan Baptiste. "My original motive was to spread multicultural awareness, be-

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—Jocelyn Bray, Lake Oswego High School student

cause there is not much in the curriculum," Baptiste said.

He read Angela Davis' autobiography, wanting his fellow students to be aware of who Davis was and about the problems she continues to fight to rectify in the criminal justice system.

"Less than 15 percent of people in prison are murders and rapists," Baptiste explained. "The other people are people with smaller crimes and drug offenses,

but they are not hurting other people."

Davis spoke of the violence against women that occurs in prison, the denial of medical treatment of prisoners, slave labor and many other abuses that are overlooked because the offenses are perpetrated against prisoners.

"I find it very interesting that we don't seem to be concerned about what it means to treat human beings the way that they are treated when they're in prison," said Davis.

"The assumption is that all of the two million people who are in prison have committed horrendous crimes. Some of them have, but others are in prison because they have been caught with drugs," she said.

Pointing out the many prescription drug commercials on television, she went on to say that people have doctors and can afford mood altering drugs and anti-depressants.

"People in this country who don't have doctors, also experience psy-

chological disorders. Often times they medicate themselves by going to the drug connection on the street," Davis said. She called prisons "industrial complexes," that use cheap labor and buy vast quantities of commercial goods.

The prison industry perpetuates itself with prisoners on nonviolent drug charges, because it is "profitable," she explained, pointing out how the crime rate continues to go down, but that the prison population keeps increasing.

Finally, Davis told how the problems in the criminal justice system are part of the bigger problem of racism that many people like to believe has gone away.

She says 70 percent of prisoners are people of color, many of which have permanently lost their right to vote.

Davis says the only solution is to spend more money on education than on prisons.

The reason we don't, Davis said: "Schools don't make profits."

Oregon Congressman Questioned Because of Race

(AP)—U.S. Rep. David Wu, the only Chinese-American ever elected to Congress, was briefly denied admittance to U.S. Department of Energy headquarters last week by guards who asked if he was an American.

"The conduct of the DOE guards is both ironic and disturbing," Wu, of Oregon's 1st Congressional District, said.

"However, this is not about the treatment of any individual," Wu said. "I am disturbed that yesterday's incident is the tip of the iceberg, an

indicator of a much larger problem at DOE which may be damaging our national security."

Wu said security guards asked him twice whether he was an American, even though he presented his con-

gressional identification.

The guards denied Wu entrance, along with an aide, who also is Asian American, Wu said.

Lopatto said everybody entering the building, including Abraham,

must present identification, and all visitors are required to confirm whether they are U.S. citizens under a presidential directive to protect sensitive classified information.

"This was a mixup with procedures

and the fact that the congressman was not expected to arrive through the garage entrance," Lopatto said. "It was really nothing more than that."

Wu was allowed to enter the build-

ing and give the speech after a supervisor intervened.

Energy Department officials told Wu's office the caution was justified because congressional IDs are easy to fake.



U.S. Rep. David Wu

indicator of a much larger problem at DOE which may be damaging our national security."

Jeanne Lopatto, an Energy Department spokeswoman, said it was a simple mistake.

Lopatto said an escort was waiting for Wu in the building lobby, but he entered through the garage, where security guards had not been told about his appointment.

The guards "did exactly what they're supposed to do," Lopatto said, but she added that "it's unfortunate that the congressman was held up on his way to his meeting, and we regret that."

Wu went to the Department of Energy headquarters on Wednesday

Oregon Moves To Erase 'Squaw' From Geographic Names

'Slur' called state-sanctioned racism by Portland lawmaker

(AP)—The word "squaw" would have to be erased from official place names in Oregon under a bill that has neared final legislative approval.

On a 44-5 vote, the House Thursday endorsed a Senate-passed bill that would eliminate from geographic names what House Minority Leader Dan Gardner, D-Portland, called a "slur" reference to American Indian women. Allowing the word to remain a part of official place names is "nothing short of state-sanctioned racism," Gardner said. The measure, SB488, returns to the Senate for action on amendments. The bill would allow governments to keep "squaw" in place names until Jan. 2, 2005, or two years after the federal Interior and Agriculture agencies stop using the term, whichever is later. A related resolution passed by the Legislature urges the Secretary of the Interior and the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to remove the word from various geographic areas and sites. Rep. Betsy Close, R-Albany, disagreed that the term is a slur and read a letter from a citizen urging lawmakers to "leave history alone" and not waste tax money changing place names.

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